

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are in the case. Claim 27 is new and reads on the elected claims. Claims 14-23 and 27 are under consideration, claims 1-13 and 24-26 having been withdrawn.

In reply to the final Office Action of September 25, 2006, Applicant submits the following remarks.

Claims 14 and 18-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rozenkranc US 6,276,061 ("Rozenkranc") in view of Apprille 5,813,293 ("Apprille '293") and further in view of Coffin US 6,442,850 ("Coffin"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The invention of amended claim 14 includes the load-bearing surfaces (146, 148) which act to absorb abusive loads in an over-pivot situation beyond a normal pivot range. As discussed in Applicant's previous response, neither Rozenkranc nor Apprille alone or in combination discloses or suggests a load-bearing surface on the connecting member arms that is contacted only when the housing is pivoted beyond a limit angle that is greater than the normal pivot angle. Applicant believes that, since the Examiner has withdrawn the previous rejections and made a new rejection that includes Coffin, the Examiner acknowledges this deficiency. Examiner's comments on the Apprille '293 reference (at p. 3, first paragraph) merely repeat the same analysis of that reference presented in the previous Office Action (therein at the paragraph bridging pp. 4 to 5); however, Applicant's previous Response at page 8 (filed July 28, 2006) detailed the errors in Examiner's analysis thereof, and Examiner is again respectfully referred to those comments on the reference and the three Exhibit pages of marked-up figures attached to that Response for a correct understanding of Apprille '293.

Rozenkranc could, arguendo, at most merely suggest adding to a cartridge of the type shown in Apprille '293 a trimming blade facing in another direction, but that combination fails to suggest or disclose the novel claimed load-bearing stop surfaces. Thus, the issue at hand is whether the Coffin reference would have suggested to the person of ordinary skill to modify the Rozenkranc razor to include such a feature. Applicant submits that such a modification would not have been obvious, and in fact would have rendered the trimming blade of the Rozenkranc device non-functional. The Coffin reference does not include a trimming blade that faces in a

direction away from the first cutting region. Coffin contra-indicates its combinability with Rozenkranc, since if Coffin were to have a trimming blade that faced away from his blades (2, 3), it is submitted that during the cartridge's expected normal range of pivoting, compare Figures 6 (start position) and 7 (clockwise downward rotated position), it would crash into the handle frame 19, 42, thus violating a physical constraint and making it unsuitable for its intended purpose. It also appears that in Coffin such blades would be useless as they would be made inaccessible by the handle portion 19 which must form a deep shroud behind the blade unit 1 because of the presence of the compound sliding lever arrangement 25, in contrast to Rozenkranc's Figure 3, thus the extra blade in Coffin would be blocked from usefulness.

The asserted combination with Coffin is not obvious to the person of ordinary skill for additional reasons. Fundamentally, Coffin is concerned with a blade housing (1) that is a replaceable part for a handle structure that includes a permanent guard element (15) that in other conventional razor cartridges would be part of the blade cartridge that gets thrown away when the blades become dulled. Instead, Coffin forms his guard element (15) integral with the handle (19, 42) so that it is retained and reused with the handle, with only the blade housing (1) being discarded. As a result of implementing this, Coffin's blade member (1) pivots relative to the guard element (15), which is formed on the handle. The blade element (1) pivots about axis 18 against a spring bias relative to a sub-seat (14), while the subseat (14) pivots about axis 16 against a spring bias relative to the guard element (15). Coffin states that in its normal operation, the blade unit (1) only begins to rotate about the axis 18 after the sub-seat (14) has rotated about the axis 16 to about half its range of travel (compare Figs. 6, 7), see column 6, lines 4-8. Coffin fails to show or suggest load-bearing surfaces that are contacted only when the housing is pivoted beyond a limit angle that is greater than the normal pivot range angle, and furthermore does not suggest how to accommodate a trimming blade that faces away from the first cutting region into such an arrangement.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that the proposed modification would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention, and requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

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Serial No. : 10/799,037
Filed : March 11, 2004
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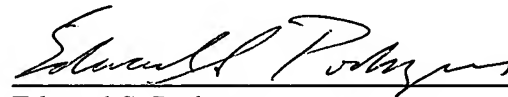
New dependent claim 27 is added directed to the feature that the blade unit comprises a guard element formed at the front of the cartridge housing preceding the one or more blades.

Support is seen in the original specification at e.g. page 5, lines 8-10 and Figure 3D. In contrast, as explained above, the Coffin reference discloses a blade unit (1) that is separately disposable from the guard element which is a permanent part of the handle and reused.

It is believed that no fees are due with this submission. The new claim has already been paid for as part of excess claims in light of previously cancelled claims. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 07-1350, referencing Attorney Docket No. 00216-667001 / Case 8137 / Z03390.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 17 November 2006



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